

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5, 11-13, 19, 21-22, 24-27, 33-43 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 13, and 27 being the independent claims.

Based on the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 5, 13, 19, 27, 33-43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,734,879 to Hasha et al. ("Hasha") and Pub. No. U.S. 2002/0022991 to Sharood et al. ("Sharood") and U.S. Patent No. 6,941,356 to Meyerson ("Meyerson").

The Examiner has also rejected claims 1, 5, 11-13, 19, 21-22, 24-27, and 33-43 under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pub. No. US 2003/0103088 to Dresti et al. ("Dresti") and U.S. Patent No. 6,198,479 to Humpleman et al. ("Humpleman") and Meyerson.

For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections.

Neither the Hasha-Sharood-Meyerson nor Dresti-Humpleman-Meyerson Combinations Proposed by the Examiner Teach or Suggest Each and Every Limitation of Applicants' Claimed Invention

The Examiner concedes that neither the Hasha and Sharood combination nor the Dresti and Humpleman combination relied upon by the Examiner teaches all the elements defining Applicants' invention, including that the control objects representing

affiliate system components associated with a selected activity can be pre-configured by a user to be hidden from view on the control interface, as required independent claims 1, 13, and 27. Specifically, as the Examiner correctly recognizes, Hasha-Sharood and Dresti-Humpleman are devoid of disclosure relating to “a third set of control objects representing one or more affiliate system components capable of providing an input to said selected system component and associated with performing the selected activity, but pre-configured by a user to be hidden from display on the user interface” as required by claim 1, or the step of “hiding from display on the user interface one or more affiliate system components that are associated with performing the selected activity but are pre-configured by a user not to be displayed” as required by claim 13, or “computer readable program code for hiding from display on the user interface one or more affiliate system components that are associated with performing the selected activity but are pre-configured by a user not to be displayed” as required by claim 27.

In the prior Office Action dated August 29, 2008, the Examiner addressed this significant shortcoming by reliance on U.S. Patent No. 7,358,956 to Hinckley *et al.* (“Hinckley”). Hinckley disclosed a computer input device with a contact-based or proximity-based feature that reduced on-screen clutter by displaying information when a user’s finger came in proximity of the screen, and removed such information when the user’s finger was withdrawn. In response to that Office Action, Applicants pointed out the fact that the user in Hinckley does not pre-configure the on-screen display of information. Rather, the ability to display and/or remove such information was merely a function of the location of user’s finger in relation to the screen, and was not preconfigured in any sense by the user. As such, Hasha-Sharood-Hinckley and Dresti-

Humpleman-Hinckley combinations proposed by the Examiner failed to arrive at Applicants' claimed invention.

In the present Office Action dated March 3, 2009, the Examiner reasserts the obviousness rejection based on the Hasha-Sharood and Dresti-Humpleman combinations, but now relies on Meyerson (instead of Hinckley) to cure the admitted deficiencies in the foregoing references. Meyerson is directed to a "primary" network device that automatically configures its user interface based on information it receives in real time from and regarding other (secondary or peripheral) network devices. Depending on the overall network environment detected (e.g., types of secondary devices on the network, their capabilities, their location/proximity, etc.), the primary network device in Meyerson automatically adapts its user interface to conform to such an environment. For example, if the primary network device is a remote controller, the remote controller automatically conforms its user interface to show only the controls for the controllable devices that are in close proximity (e.g., when the user is in the bed room, it displays control options for a television or DVD player in the bed room, but not similar devices in the living room).

Importantly, the Examiner states that Meyerson teaches that the user may manually make configuration changes, including pre-configuring the user interface to hide control options for certain secondary or peripheral devices. Meyerson, however, makes no such disclosure.¹ To the contrary, Meyerson teaches away from having the

¹ Meyerson discusses "manual" changes in the context of how the primary device is configured to operate within a certain network environment (e.g., what network connections should be established), not in the context of what is displayed or not displayed on the user interface. Changes to the user interface are made automatically.

user pre-configure which devices should be shown or hidden. Rather, Meyerson repeatedly instructs that the primary network device configures the user interface automatically (i.e., without user input) and in real time (i.e., not pre-configured).

There can be no doubt that Meyerson teaches that the user interface is automatically adapted “on the fly” depending on information that it obtains regarding the secondary devices on the network. [See, e.g., col. 1, lines 44-50 (“a device that automatically configures itself and its user interface depending on the specific peripheral or peer devices in which the primary device finds itself directly or indirectly connected to”), col., 3, lines 49-56 (“invention automatically configures the personal computer differently depending upon the overall environment it finds itself”), col. 7, lines 35-38 (“the remote control automatically adapts and simplifies its user interface to only show optimal controls for those devices in close physical proximity”).] Thus, in Meyerson, the determination as to which devices can be controlled via the user interface and which devices cannot is not pre-configured by the user. [See col. 2, lines 53-55 (“The invention solves the problem of needing to manually configure a primary device based on the environment that the primary device is physically or logically located”).]

In stark contrast, Applicants’ invention allows a user to configure or set-up in advance which system components are to be displayed on a control interface and which ones are to be hidden from display ((*see, e.g.*, Paragraphs [0091] to [0097] and Figure 10). Any particular configuration set up by the user is fixed until the user sets up a different configuration. Notwithstanding the lack of automation as compared to the approach taught by Meyerson, Applicants’ approach gives the user the opportunity to

customize the interface by providing the user more control (and the control device less control) as to what is displayed and what is not displayed on the interface.

Meyerson teaches away from this claimed feature. Specifically, Meyerson eschews the use of pre-stored data entered by the user to drive the configuration of the user interface. Indeed, Meyerson expressly confirms that using “previously stored configuration” data is “quite different from the invention” disclosed in Meyerson [col. 9, lines 54-61]. Accordingly, Meyerson cannot be combined with the Hasha and Sharood references, or the Dresti and Humpleman references, in the manner proposed by the Examiner to reach Applicants’ claimed invention. Such a combination is unsupportable in fact or law.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that neither the proposed combination of Hasha and Sharood and Meyerson nor the proposed combination of Dresti and Humpleman and Meyerson render independent claims 1, 13 and 27 unpatentable under Section 103(a).

Dependent Claims

The claims that depend from independent claims 1, 13, and 27, are likewise not rendered unpatentable by the Hasha-Sharood-Meyerson combination or the Dresti-Humpleman-Meyerson combination for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend and further in view of their own respective features.

Conclusion

Because the Hasha-Sharood-Meyerson combination proposed by the Examiner does not teach or suggest each and every feature of independent claims 1, 13 and 27, as

explained above, these claims, and the claims that depend therefrom, cannot be rendered unpatentable for obviousness by that combination.

Similarly, because the Dresti-Humpleman-Meyerson combination proposed by the Examiner does not teach or suggest each and every feature of independent claims 1, 13 and 27, as explained above, these claims, and the claims that depend therefrom, also cannot be rendered unpatentable for obviousness by that combination.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of pending claims 1, 5, 11-13, 19, 21-22, 24-27, 33-43 be reconsidered and withdrawn and allowed to issue.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.



Robert Sokohl
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 36,013

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1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600

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